

# **SECURE COMMONWEALTH PANEL MEETING**

**AUGUST 11, 2010**

**PATRICK HENRY BUILDING, RICHMOND**

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Attendees: Terrie Suit, Bill Bolling, Joseph Bouchard, Eric Casey, Carrie Cantrell, David Tyeryar, Paul Conway, Cathie Hutchins, Marla Decker, Jim Duffey, Michael Guevremont, Bill Hazel, Karen Remley, Glendell Hill, Jim Horton, Algie Howell, Joe Inge, Edward Macon, Dario Marquez, Anna McRay, Bert Mizusawa, Ralph Northam, John O'Bannon, Jim Redick, Beverly Sherwood, Margaret Vanderhye, David Waldman, John Watkins, Charles Werner, Barclay Winn.

## **Welcoming Remarks**

Terrie Suit, Chairperson, opened the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

Introductions were made by the panel and the audience members.

## **Secure Commonwealth Panel History and Purpose Overview**

Mrs. Suit introduced George Foresman, the Homeland Security Advisor for the Commonwealth of Virginia under Governor Warner's Administration and the former Undersecretary of Preparedness for the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Foresman acknowledged Delegate O'Bannon and Delegate Sherwood for being active on the Secure Commonwealth Panel from the beginning after 9/11. Mr. Foresman told the panel that transitions in government are never easy. Since there are many new members on the panel, this is a great opportunity to assess the past and move forward with a new vision.

Mr. Foresman described the evolution of emergency management through the years by discussing past disasters.

Air Florida crash on the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in 1982, lessons learned from that event were in the areas of interoperability and information sharing.

Election Day Floods of 1985, significant damage and large response. The Commonwealth was beginning to think about preparedness.

World Series Earthquake of 1989, the world was watching this event on live television. Major issues resulting from this response was how to talk to the public and provide them needed information.

Hurricane Andrew 1992, problems were in the area of interoperability and an uncoordinated federal response.

Midwest Floods 1993 and first bombing of the World Trade Center, the Commonwealth was focused on nuclear attack and international terrorism, not domestic terrorism.

Between 1994 – 1997 the lowest number of disasters occurred except for blizzards. The problem area was complacency.

Oklahoma bombing 1995, the attention was now directly on domestic terrorism. Virginia was following Washington DC's lead.

Nunn-Lugar Domenici legislation passed and focused on homegrown terrorism. Grant money was distributed across 50 states.

The Commonwealth created the Domestic Preparedness Working Group in 1998, which was a precursor to the Secure Commonwealth Panel. This working group planted seeds on being better prepared, especially for terrorism.

There was a lot of activity happening at the federal level, including the formation of the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, referred to as the Gilmore Commission. Governor Gilmore was chair of this panel.

Governor Gilmore and Governor Hunt jointly sponsored a state terrorism workshop in Williamsburg. Three major issues came out of the workshop: (1) sovereignty, (2) more resources needed, and (3) framework of an integrated, coordinated response.

The Domestic Preparedness Working Group was pushing along and reacting to events in Washington, DC. They had no clear mission.

In 1999 we had Y2K, this transformed policy makers to how technology can potential be bad.

In 2001, the Domestic Preparedness Secure Panel pushed issues forward and broke down walls. The panel cannot have everyone doing everything. The panel decided to cross-coordinate with Cabinet offices, legislators, private sector to develop a Commonwealth wide strategy. Preparedness was just not about terrorism, but included biological, cyber security, etc. and the ability to deal with contingencies.

Executive Order 7 established the Virginia Secure Panel in 2002 and in 2006 legislation was passed to codified the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness.

After 9/11, there was no national strategy. Department of Homeland Security was created in 2003; intelligence reform bill was approved in 2004. Real grant funding to states began flowing in 2005-2006.

The Secure Commonwealth Panel is bi-partisan from day one. The role of the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness is to work with and through others to improve preparedness in Virginia.

The 9/11 Commission reports had a failure of imagination. No one expected the levies to break during Hurricane Katrina, no one thought about an oil disaster in the Gulf, but local, state, and federal governments are working with our private partners to ensure Virginia is prepared for a crisis.

Mr. Foresman asked the panel to produce a vision, execute, and become accountable.

Questions:

Challenges? Knowing the issues and having a common level of understanding. There were also turf problems and tensions amongst offices in the past. On the flipside, competition among state agencies made them work harder. Engage in dialogue.

Areas of greater vulnerability, what to put the most attention on?

- 1) Information Sharing; sharing information to the maximum degree possible. Just look at the Gulf Coast and their problems.
- 2) Willing to take a hard look at preparedness, trust but verify attitude and ask the hard probing questions.
- 3) Complacency; find the right balance.
- 4) Education; work on the tone and tenor of the message to the public. Encourage people and businesses to prepare.
- 5) Relationships; understand roles. In most cases during an event, resources are local. Unique opportunity to come together. No one owns anything exclusively; define roles and responsibilities.

There are also economic ramifications. With the current economic situation it is hard to tell people there is no money when a few years ago the money was flowing. Need to teach citizens to be more independent during a crisis. Keep the message consistent, explain everything. The Department of Homeland Security's Ready Campaign changed everything and provided that consistent message to the public.

Mrs. Suit thanked Mr. Foresman for his remarks.

Mrs. Suit asked the panel to provide Wendy Hoffman with a short paragraph bio to put on the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness website.

Mrs. Suit encouraged the panel to be a think tank and bring ideas to the meeting. We can manage your ideas through the use of our sub panels. After hearing Mr. McAllister's presentation on sub panels, keep in mind we can create new sub panels and get rid of obsolete ones.

### **Secure Commonwealth Panel Sub Panel Overview**

Mike McAllister, Deputy Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness

Please see handout.

The Secure Commonwealth Panel has five sub panels: first responders, business and industry, critical infrastructure, health and medical, and outreach.

Each sub panel is supported by a member of the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness.

- **Health and Medical** - Jim Hopper and Kerry Stuver
- **Outreach** - Brandon de Graaf and Megan Stuver
- **Critical Infrastructure** – Mike McAllister and Jeremiah Hockman
- **First Responder** – Mike Coleman
- **Business and Industry** – Jim Hopper and Duane Stafford

A suggestion by a panel member is to have an Evacuation sub panel and focus on evacuation plans and any shortfalls. The Virginia Modeling and Simulation Center in Suffolk does a lot of work on evacuation models out of Hampton Roads.

Mrs Suit also suggested to the panel that they are allowed to bring in outside sources to help with the sub panels, such as the media participating in the Outreach sub panel.

Mrs. Suit asked the panel to let Wendy Hoffman know which sub panel they would like to serve on. There is also an opportunity to add ad-hoc committees as well.

Mrs. Suit also encouraged the panel to go online and read the National Capital Region Behavioral Study, which can be found at [http://www.vdem.state.va.us/library/behavior\\_study/index.cfm](http://www.vdem.state.va.us/library/behavior_study/index.cfm). It is interesting to see the trends.

### **Health and Medical Sub Panel**

Delegate John O'Bannon, Chair of the Health and Medical Sub Panel

The Health and Medical Sub Panel uses a structure with smaller work groups. The sub panel holds large meetings, forums, and free focus groups to identify the problem areas. We train for all hazards. It is a bi-partisan effort. The sub panel also performs in exercises where they accumulate lessons learned.

Dr. Remley provided the update. Please see handout.

The local health departments, which report up through the state, have been working with the school systems and establishing a relationship. The health departments are now able to use an electronic system to view absentee rates across the Commonwealth and determine if closing a school is an option. Closing might not be an option, where are the kids going to go. It might be easier and wiser to keep the children in school. The health department is working side by side with the school liaison officer.

Digital health records are also a big issue in the health community.

There is a CDC Competitive Grant out that will help with establishments of health fusion centers.

Working on the surveillance process, reviewing illness patterns, look at electronic ER discharges, and spot early trends.

Half of the vaccines given out were by the Virginia Department of Health and the other half by doctor's offices and pharmacies. We are partnering with the private sectors in many of these initiatives. The Immunization database has seen a growing participation; started at 75 providers, it is now over 3,000. This is an easy way to track registration.

The Virginia Department of Health will provide a summary of the national strategic stockpile. They had a great exercise at the National Scout Jamboree with the stockpile.

**Motion to convene closed meeting:**

The motion is for the Secure Commonwealth Panel to convene a closed meeting for the purpose of discussing plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity, and to receive briefings by staff members or law-enforcement or emergency service officials concerning actions to be taken to respond to such activity or a related threat to public safety. The purpose of the closed meeting is to review all current disaster, emergency management, and terrorism management plans. The applicable exemption is § 2.2-3711(A)(19) of the *Code of Virginia*.

A motion was made by the Chairperson to close the meeting and Secretary Decker second the motion. A roll call was conducted with all panel members in agreement.

Motion to reconvene in open session, and certify that to the best of the knowledge of each member of the Secure Commonwealth Panel, only the matters regarding the specifics for the discussion of plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity and to receive briefings by staff members, legal counsel, or law-enforcement or emergency service officials concerning actions taken to respond to such activity or a related threat to public

safety, and only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

A motion was made by the Chairperson to open the meeting and Secretary Decker second the motion. A roll call was conducted with all panel members in agreement.

Dario Marquez would like the panel to continue to support the private security issues. Last Administration's panel approved the Department of Criminal Justice Services using the 7 signs of terrorism in their training.

### **Closing Remarks**

Terrie Suit, Chairperson

This panel will have a great partnership with all of the members represented and your background. We will work together and be cooperative.

Please identify the sub panels you would like to be a part of, any issues or ideas for the panel, and any agenda items.

We will provide you with a set schedule of meeting dates.

A public announcement of your appointment is forthcoming.

Mrs. Suit adjourned the meeting.